

## Possible Overwintering as Pupae 1977/1978?

By A. ARCHER-LOCK\*

It is a well worn and almost invariably rejected proposition that some of those species of butterfly which normally hibernate do occasionally remain in the pupa stage until the following spring. The extinguishing argument is that some insects, on emerging, promptly go into hibernation. Bearing this in mind, I put forward the following "evidence" with some diffidence, but nevertheless feel virtually convinced by my own eyes! It does seem possible that the poor cold weather conditions of late summer 1977 may have had a special effect.

In each of the following records, the butterfly was found to be in immaculate mint condition, particularly with that bloom and fresh richness of colouring associated with the newly emerged insect. All dates refer to 1978.

February 27th. Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*). No others appeared in the area for several days. Each showed some signs of wear.

March 24th. Peacock (*Nymphalis io*). Early afternoon on a warm sunny day and yet with a rather feeble flight between basking spots, as if gathering strength after emergence. Strikingly fresh.

April 2nd. Two immaculate Small Tortoiseshells join a small group at a nettle bed where others of tarnished appearance had been present for over a fortnight.

April 2nd. One immaculate male Brimstone (*Gonopteryx rhamni*) where several others, showing blemishes, had been active for some days.

These observations came about mainly during research into the roosting habits of small tortoiseshells, when it was found that at first they left the nettle beds towards evening, but by mid March, remained on site, creeping into small hollows. In one interesting case, the butterflies which had hibernated on the barrelled brick ceiling of an ammunition chamber in an old fort, returned to almost identical pitches towards evening. The route involved flying out through an opening from the virtually pitch dark chamber, turning at right angles to fly across another large room, and thence out through a window.

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THE WHITE-BARRED CLEARWING: *CONOPIA SPECIFORMIS* (D. & S.) IN BRECONSHIRE. — On the 19th June, whilst looking for fritillaries, I found a single specimen of this moth resting on a coppiced alder on a common on the south bank of the Elan river, near its confluence with the Wye. A careful search yielded no more, but as there are many coppiced alders and larger trees there, I hope next year to be able to find larvae or pupae. This is the first record of any member of the Sesiidae for VC42. — ANDREW PARKER, Pont-ar-dulas, Llanafan Fawr, Builth Wells, Powys.